

Academy of Historical Arts



Responsibility Policy

Author:
Keith Farrell

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Version and Copyright Information

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Contents

1	Responsibility in Regular Lessons.....	4
2	Responsibility in Sparring	6
3	Responsibility at Events.....	7
4	Student-Organised Activities	8

The Academy of Historical Arts asserts its right
to change this policy at any time.

1 Responsibility in Regular Lessons

In regular lessons, responsibility for the activities and for the behaviour of the participants rests with the instructor who is leading the class. The class instructor should ensure that the activities included in the session are appropriate for the people who will be attending, and that unsafe and inappropriate activities are excluded from the session.

Furthermore, the instructor must ensure that participants follow the club's health and safety policy at all times, and must ensure that the participants wear the minimum required safety gear. Clubs may write their own health and safety policy, or may adopt the AHA Health & Safety Policy. If choosing the former option, then the club's policy must at least be in line with the AHA policy; it may exceed the AHA policy in terms of safety procedures and requirements, but it may not mandate a lower level of safety than the AHA policy. Clubs may write their own minimum safety gear requirements, which may exceed the AHA requirements (found in the AHA Health & Safety Policy), but may never allow a lower level of protective gear than the minimum levels mandated in the AHA policy.

If at any time the health and safety policy or the minimum required level of safety gear is ignored, then the instructor of the class is directly responsible for anything that goes wrong as a result.

If there are several instructors who are assisting with running the lesson, then they may be to some degree responsible for any problems that develop. Instructors should always be looking out for problems and taking steps to avoid danger or to mitigate risk. The instructor who is in charge of the lesson may bear full responsibility for any problems, but assistant instructors may bear partial responsibility if they see a problem with safety and do nothing to correct it. In the situation where two or more instructors are involved in running a lesson, but neither instructor is formally "in charge" of the lesson, then all the instructors involved will share responsibility equally.

Individual participants have the responsibility of following all instructions given by the instructor(s), and undertaking participation of the lesson in a safe, responsible and mature fashion. If an instructor gives a piece of instruction, but a participant ignores this instruction and causes an accident as a result, then the fault and responsibility lies solely with the individual who ignored the instruction.

If a club instructor delegates supervision for part of the practice to another individual, then that individual has a responsibility to oversee the safety of that part of the practice. For example, if the instructor takes a more advanced student and gives him the task of teaching the beginners how to do a particular exercise, while the instructor himself focused on the more experienced students in the class, then the chosen student has to accept responsibility for the part of the practice that he is to oversee. However, the instructor has the responsibility of choosing a competent and responsible person to act as supervisor or assistant during a lesson; if a poor choice is made, and someone without the necessary skill, knowledge, experience or training is asked to take a supervisory or assisting role, then the responsibility lies with the instructor due to his poor choice.

If a guest instructor comes to teach a lesson for the club, then the responsibility lies with the guest instructor. The guest instructor must ensure that the session is safe, that dangerous practice is avoided and risks mitigated. The individuals who usually take responsibility for the sessions should make a point of enforcing any safety issues missed by the guest instructor. For example, a guest instructor may not know precisely what minimum amount of safety gear is required for any given exercise or activity, and so the regular instructors should take responsibility for ensuring that the club's rules are followed correctly.

If the club has an executive committee (usually a president, treasurer and secretary, although potentially other positions as well), then these individuals are responsible only for the activities outlined in their job description. The committee should not be responsible for a problems resulting from poor decisions or unsafe behaviour from an instructor running a practice.

The Senior Instructors of the organisation expect that all instructors and people tasked with leading an activity should be familiar with the relevant policies (available through the Academy of Historical Arts website).¹ The Senior Instructors do not accept any responsibility if club instructors choose not to follow the relevant policy documentation or do not stay up to date with safety requirements; the responsibility rests with the instructors who do not follow the rules, standards or policies set out by the Academy.

¹ <http://www.historical-academy.co.uk/library/documents.php>

2 Responsibility in Sparring

It is the responsibility of the individual in charge of the sparring activity to set the parameters for the sparring and to ensure that all participants understand what is allowed and what is not allowed. The person in charge of the activity should supervise closely to ensure that the behaviour remains within the boundaries of acceptability and safety, and should crack down immediately on any behaviour that threatens the safety of anyone, whether involved in the session or not.

It is the responsibility of every individual participating in the sparring to follow the instructions provided and to work within the parameters given. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of each individual to train safely and to look out for the safety of his/her training partner. While the person in charge of the session should supervise to ensure that behaviour remains safe, each participant has some measure of responsibility to alert this person to unsafe behaviours. Where possible, participants should attempt to improve the behaviour of training partners; using phrases such as "please don't hit so hard" or "please dial down the power and let's work a little bit more slowly" can help to avoid problems before they become accidents.

The person in charge of the activity has a duty of responsibility to require the correct safety equipment and protective gear from all participants, in line the minimum requirements found in the AHA Health & Safety Policy. Individual participants are responsible for ensuring that the equipment they bring for themselves is appropriate for the activity.

3 Responsibility at Events

The event organisers bear the responsibility for ensuring safety at their event. It is also their responsibility to implement the AHA Health & Safety Policy and to ensure that at no time are any of the safety rules broken.

When an instructor leads an activity during an event, responsibility for everything that happens in that lesson falls to the instructor. The event organisers should not be responsible for an instructor's mistakes or lack of professionalism. Of course, if the event organisers already know that an instructor is likely to be a liability, then the event organisers may bear some responsibility for allowing that instructor to lead an activity.

It is the responsibility of the event organisers to ensure that there is correct provision of first aid equipment and qualified first aiders throughout the event. The first aiders involved in dealing with an injury are responsible for giving first aid and calling for an ambulance if required; their training and qualification gives them priority over the event organisers once an accident has occurred.

It is the responsibility of the event organisers to require a safe minimum level of equipment (at least in line with the AHA Health & Safety Policy) and to enforce this throughout the event. However, it is the responsibility of instructors and activity leaders to ensure that these are followed in the lessons and activities that they are leading. It is the responsibility of every participant to obey the rules and to follow the minimum requirements for safety gear.

Every participant at the event has the responsibility of looking after training partners and other participants. If an individual decides to "up the ante" during an exercise, or to go outwith the parameters specified by the instructor, then that individual bears all responsibility if an accident occurs as a result. Individuals may always request training partners to moderate their behaviour by asking "please use less strength" or by making similar requests.

4 Student-Organised Activities

Sometimes students show initiative and organise a meeting or activity without input from an instructor. However, if there is not an instructor present, then the individual who is in charge of the activity bears the responsibility normally borne by the instructor; if no one person is "in charge" of the meeting or activity, then everyone bears equal responsibility.

Club administrators, club instructors, Academy instructors, Academy officials, and the Academy's Senior Instructors cannot, should not and will not take any responsibility for activities in which they are not involved. If individuals organise meetings and training outside of the regular meetings, then the participants need to take responsibility for these extra-curricular activities.